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COMMISSIONERS URGE RESIDENTS TO BE READY FOR NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

This September marks the 9th annual National Preparedness Month, and the Franklin County Commissioners are working with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other government agencies to help county employees and residents be ready for the unexpected. The Commissioners' Homeland Security and Justice Programs department is planning informational events throughout the month for county employees and asking them to help spread the message of preparedness to residents throughout the region.

"By their very nature, emergencies and natural disasters are unexpected," said commission president, John O'Grady. "But we know that these situations do sometimes occur, and it's every family's responsibility to be ready."

A recent survey conducted by the non-profit Ad Council found that most American families don't have an emergency plan, and that fewer than one in five feel prepared for a natural disaster. The commissioners are urging every family to make a plan for what it will do in case of an emergency, build an emergency kit that the family can take if evacuation is necessary, and to stockpile a few days of supplies in case help isn't immediately available.

"Our public safety personnel prepare every day to protect our community and to enable us to return to normal conditions as quickly as possible if a disaster should occur," said Commissioner Paula Brooks. "Every family can and should prepare for emergencies and natural disasters. We want Franklin County residents to be safe no matter what situation we face, and that requires being prepared."

FEMA recommends that families keep three days worth of food and water on hand in case of an emergency, and also reminds families to include medicine in their emergency kits and plan for the wellbeing of their pets. Other essential items may include important phone numbers, a flashlight (with fresh batteries), first aid kit, whistle, dust masks, maps, a manual can opener, and an adjustable wrench to turn off utilities.

"The thought of something happening to your spouse, partner, kids, or even pets, is difficult to comprehend," said Commissioner Marilyn Brown. "I hope that everyone will take the opportunity this September to make a plan, make a kit, talk about this issue with their family, and be ready for emergencies that may arise. You never know when a disaster may happen, and when it does, it's too late to prepare."

Information and detailed emergency planning templates can be found at www.Ready.gov.

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